

Altoona Gymnasium
(YMCA)
Lexington Avenue and 9th Street
First Ward Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5815

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ALTOONA GYMNASIUM (YMCA)

HABS No. PA-5815

Location: Lexington Avenue and 9th Street

Date of Erection: 1924

Description: This two-story Italian Renaissance-style structure measures approximately 132' x 116' x 42' high. Constructed of reinforced concrete, the building is faced with buff brick. The roof is flat with a modillioned cornice. The front facade is arranged in seven bays. The second-floor windows are large, round-arched, and trimmed with stone or concrete. The first-floor windows are small and unadorned. The entrance in the center of the facade is also trimmed with stone or concrete and topped with a cornice, above which is a blank concrete panel.

There is a swimming pool on the first floor and a gym above. According to a 1925 description, "The Altoona gymnasium, a new health center, has one of the finest gymnasium floors and swimming pools in any gymnasium in the country."

History: The Altoona Gymnasium was built in 1924 through public subscription at a cost of \$350,000. The gym was financially unsuccessful, however, and closed within a few years. In 1931 it was sold to the Altoona YMCA for \$101,000 including the equipment. The YMCA is still located in the building.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1932. Altoona, 44, 58. Altoona Mirror (August 6, 1949).

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. An overview of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and an overview of the first ward neighborhood (HABS No. PA-5788) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by HABS Senior Historian Alison K. Hoagland, project leader and editor, in the summer of 1989. Hoagland's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.